

**STATEMENT OF FRED BOYLES, SUPERINTENDENT, ANDERSONVILLE  
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE AND CEMETERY, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,  
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ASSISTANCE &  
MEMORIAL AFFAIRS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS'  
AFFAIRS, CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL  
CEMETERIES ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.**

May 8, 2007

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I wish to thank the committee for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the national cemeteries that are managed by the National Park Service. It is a great honor to protect the memories of those who have served our country and to interpret the conflicts in which they served.

The National Park Service (NPS) protects and manages 14 of our nation's national cemeteries. With the exception of Custer National Cemetery at Little Bighorn Battlefield, all of the cemeteries that the NPS manages date to the Civil War. Most of these cemeteries are located within park units that tell the story of the Civil War campaign or conflict in which the interred soldiers served. A list of all NPS national cemeteries and the sites with which they are associated is included at the end of this testimony.

Many of the Civil War national cemeteries were established soon after the battle ended. In some, such as Yorktown National Cemetery, 1,434 of the 2,183 soldiers interred were unidentified, a reminder of the scale of brutality and loss suffered by soldiers and families

during this war between the American states. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Civil War veterans and their families began to pay tribute to their fallen comrades by erecting monuments and memorials. Beginning in 1933, many of these cemeteries, with their monuments and memorials, were transferred to the National Park Service as part of the national battlefields, national historic sites, and national military parks that interpret the campaigns, conflicts, and ordeals that the soldiers endured. Indeed, there is no better way to honor the dead than to preserve the memory of the cause that they served.

Two of the national cemeteries within the National Park Service are still open to veterans for burial. They are Andersonville National Cemetery located in Southwest Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery located in East Tennessee. In 2006, Andersonville buried 161 veterans and their dependents and Andrew Johnson buried 67. As of January 2007, Andrew Johnson had approximately 457 grave spaces available and Andersonville had 6,669 grave spaces available for future grave sites. Both of these cemeteries follow the same rules and regulations for burials that apply to cemeteries administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Cemeteries that are more than a century old require constant attention. Over the past 5 years, the NPS has devoted more than \$1 million in project funds to repair stone walls, headstones, monuments, and walkways. Examples of projects completed with these funds include \$675,000 to repoint and repair cemetery walls at Andersonville, Battleground, Fort Donelson, and Fredericksburg National Cemeteries; \$145,000 to

realign and maintain headstones at Gettysburg, Stones River, and Vicksburg National Cemeteries; and \$118,000 to repair sidewalks at Andrew Johnson National Cemetery.

In addition to these projects, each unit of the National Park Service with a national cemetery also has maintenance staff who dedicate at least part of their time to maintaining headstones and grounds. In FY 2005, the NPS's National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (Center) delivered nine classes on cemetery preservation to 300 employees of the NPS, an effort to increase the technical skills of our maintenance employees and managers responsible for these sacred places. The Center has also partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) National Cemetery Administration on a multi-year project to test headstone cleaning agents.

While we have devoted funds and employees to cemetery maintenance, as is often the case with historic resources, much remains to be done. We are working closely with the VA to upgrade our cemeteries to the conditions set forth in their recently released "Cemetery Standards of Appearance". In 2006, the Department appointed me to serve as an ex-officio member of the VA's National Cemetery Advisory Committee. I am working closely with the VA to help NPS cemeteries achieve VA standards and to coordinate the efforts of the two bureaus.

Once again, I thank the Committee for allowing me to present this testimony on this issue and would be happy to answer any questions members of the Committee may have.

### **National Cemeteries and Associated National Park System Units**

Andersonville National Cemetery at Andersonville National Historic Site;

Andrew Johnson National Cemetery at Andrew Johnson National Historic Site;

Antietam National Cemetery at Antietam National Battlefield;

Battleground National Cemetery at Rock Creek Park;

Chalmette National Cemetery at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve;

Custer National Cemetery at Little Bighorn National Battlefield;

Fort Donelson National Cemetery at Fort Donelson National Battlefield;

Fredericksburg National Cemetery at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park;

Gettysburg National Cemetery at Gettysburg National Military Park;

Poplar Grove National Cemetery at Petersburg National Battlefield;

Shiloh National Cemetery at Shiloh National Military Park;

Stones River National Cemetery at Stones River National Battlefield;

Vicksburg National Cemetery at Vicksburg National Military Park; and

Yorktown National Battlefield at Colonial National Historical Park